



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR

Pheasant Seasons Similar

North Dakota pheasant hunters bagged nearly the same number of roosters in 2004 as 2003.

"This was somewhat of a surprise since we knew production was down last summer, especially in the southwest, leading to fewer young birds in the fall population and eventually in the harvest," said Stan Kohn, upland game bird biologist for the State Game and Fish Department.

Last fall's pheasant harvest was 587,600 birds, down less than 1 percent from 592,066 in 2003. The number of hunters was down only 3 percent, from 88,809 in 2003 to 85,982 last year. The number of resident hunters dropped from 63,711 to 59,030, while the number of nonresident pheasant hunters increased from 25,098 to 26,952. Birds bagged per hunter increased from 6.67 to 6.83, and each hunter spent an average of 5.46 days afield.

Counties with the highest percentage of pheasants taken by resident hunters were McLean, 9.4; Burleigh, 7.5; Hettinger, 6.5; Ransom, 5.8; and Sargent, 5.7. Top counties for nonresident hunters were Hettinger, 19.7; Dickey, 11.6; Sargent, 7.4; McIntosh, 5.6; and Emmons, 5.4.

Annual pheasant season statistics, Kohn said, are determined by a mail survey of resident and nonresident hunters.

CWD Surveillance Efforts Continue

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will continue its Hunter-Harvested Surveillance program for chronic wasting disease during the 2005 deer season.

Hunters are encouraged to stop at deer head collection sites and provide samples from their deer. Heads will be removed on site, or hunters may drop off heads at one of these sites. Tags will remain on the ear or antler, and carcass tags will remain with the deer. Hunters will be given a temporary tag for transportation purposes.

Samples from hunter-harvested deer will be taken from animals this fall in 25 deer hunting units: 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F1, 2F2, 2G, 2G1, 2G2, 2L, 3B2, 3D1, 3D2, 3E1, 3E2, 3F1, 3F2, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E and 4F.

Game and Fish personnel will operate two collection sites at the Belfied Tesoro truck stop opening weekend of gun season. Through December, heads can also be dropped off at Game and Fish offices in Williston, Dickinson, Bismarck, Riverdale, Devils Lake, Harvey (Lonetree) and Jamestown; and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Coleharbor (Audubon National Wildlife Refuge), Devils Lake, Moffit (Long Lake NWR), Upham (J. Clark Salyer NWR), Kenmare (Des Lacs NWR), Kulm and Berthold (Upper Souris NWR). Meat processors in selected units will also take part in surveillance efforts.

To date, CWD has not been diagnosed in wild or farmed deer or elk in North Dakota. Test results for CWD on more than 4,000 wild deer and 80 elk harvested during the 2002-04 hunting seasons were negative.

Chronic wasting disease affects the nervous system of white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk and is fatal. Scientists have found no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans or livestock.

2004 Cottontail and Squirrel Statistics

More than 4,600 hunters participated in cottontail and tree squirrel seasons in 2004.

Last season's cottontail harvest was 13,918 animals, a decrease of 31 percent from 20,032 in 2003. Number of hunters was down 30 percent to 2,942, compared to 4,175 in 2003. Rabbits per hunter was 4.7, down from 4.8.

Counties with the highest percentage of cottontails taken by resident hunters in 2004 were Cass, 11.1 percent; Walsh, 8.3; Barnes, 7.5; Grand Forks, 6.8; and McLean, 5.7. Top counties by nonresident hunters were Emmons, 33.3; and Grant and Hettinger, 25.

The 2004 tree squirrel harvest was 7,492, down 25 percent from 9,927 in 2003. Number of hunters was down 23 percent to 1,708, compared to 2,227 in 2003. Squirrels per hunter was 4.39, down from 4.46.

Counties with the highest percentage of tree squirrels taken by residents were Walsh, 20.3 percent; Pembina, 13.2; Grand Forks, 7; and Cass, 6.

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS Live!

With Radio Host Doug Leier, Game and Fish Outreach Biologist

Saturdays at 11 a.m. (10 a.m. mountain time)

on the following North Dakota Clear Channel radio network stations:

KFGO-AM 790, Fargo

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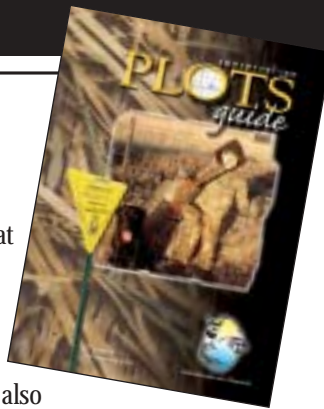
Join Doug and guests for news and conversation that embraces everyone with an interest in North Dakota's Outdoors.

PLOTS Guides Available

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's PLOTS Guide, featuring walk-in areas open to hunters, is available.

The map book is free and contains scaled down maps that show PLOTS areas, roads and trail systems, and other state and federal public land.

The guide is available at the Department's main office in Bismarck and at district offices in Riverdale, Williston, Jamestown, Lonetree (Harvey) and Devils Lake. Guides are also available at county auditor offices and some license vendors throughout the state.



Pheasant Crowing Count Up from 2004

The 2005 ring-necked pheasant spring crowing count revealed a 5 percent increase statewide in the number of pheasants heard crowing compared to last year.

The survey indicated crowing counts are comparable or up in all areas of the state, except the far west central and southwestern portions. "Crow count numbers are down anywhere from 10-38 percent in those areas," said Stan Kohn, North Dakota Game and Fish Department upland game biologist, "but nice increases were noted in the northwest, central and southeast."

Pheasant crowing counts are conducted each spring throughout North Dakota. The index does not measure an entire population density, but is an indicator of the pheasant population trend. Observers drive specified 20-mile routes, stopping at predetermined intervals, and count the number of pheasant roosters heard crowing during the stop. The information recorded is compared to previous years' data, providing a population trend.



CRAIG BIRHLE

Even though the crowing count indicates an increase in numbers, the fall pheasant population largely depends on reproduction success in late May and early June. "We do not know what affect, if any, the heavy rains in May, June and July may have had on hatching success and brood mortality," Kohn said. "At this point, the pheasant brood data is now beginning to come in, and this data will tell us more regarding the outlook for fall pheasant hunting."

Baiting Prohibited on State WMAs

Hunters are reminded that baiting to lure in game animals is prohibited on all state-owned or managed wildlife management areas.

Baiting is defined as the placement and/or use of bait for attracting big game and other wildlife to a specific location for the purpose of hunting. Baits include, but are not limited to, grains, minerals, salts, fruits, vegetables, hay or any other natural or manufactured foods.

Following are some of the issues and concerns that factored into the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's decision to ban baiting on WMAs:

- Baiting sites concentrate wildlife and promotes saliva exchange, thus increasing the potential for spread of diseases.
- Baiting sites on WMAs can lead to hunter territorialism and hunter disputes over hunting spots, which on public land are available to everyone.
- Baiting can habituate big game animals to use artificial feeds, which can increase their likelihood of depredating stored feed supplies.
- Baiting can have a strong influence on distribution and movements of animals. High concentrations of wildlife in an area can negatively affect habitat on surrounding public or private lands.

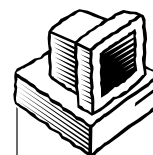
Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest Open

The deadline for submitting photos to the Game and Fish Department's annual photo contest is September 30.

Prints, slides and digital photos are all acceptable formats for entries in categories for nongame wildlife, game animals, plants and insects. The Watchable Wildlife program's annual promotion poster will still feature the top slide from the nongame category.

The photographer submitting the poster winner receives five rolls of film, while runners-up in each category receive three rolls of film. Each prize-winning photograph will appear in *North Dakota OUTDOORS* in January 2006.

Full contest rules were published in the July 2005 issue of this magazine. They are also available at discovernd.com/gnf/; by email request to ndgf@state.nd.us; or by calling Jeb Williams at 701-328-6332.



INSTANT LICENSING

Online at

www.discovernd.com/gnf/

Over the phone at **800-406-6409**

Most types of Game and Fish licenses and applications are now available both online at the Department's website, or over the phone. Online license purchases have no surcharge, while instant licensing over the phone carries a service charge of \$4 for transactions of \$70 or less, and \$10 if the cost is more than \$70.



Record Number of Walleye Fingerlings Stocked

Several years down the road, North Dakota anglers should benefit from a record number of walleye fingerlings produced at Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery this spring.

The hatchery, near Riverdale, produced 9.8 million walleye fingerlings in 2005, breaking the mark set in 1991, according to Jerry Weigel, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries production and development section leader. The average number of walleye fingerlings produced in a year is typically 4-6 million, which is directly related to statewide need.

The record total was driven by a higher than normal request of 7 million fingerlings. "With limited natural reproduction in recent years, there was a need to stock Lake Sakakawea, Devils Lake and several additional large waters," Weigel said. "Water conditions going into the spring were not the best, and most of these larger waters had conservative requests. With all the rain we had, timing of the surplus production could not have been better."

Weigel said even given the small size of the typical fingerling – about 1-2 inches – more than 6,000 pounds of walleye fingerlings were produced. "It's a great year for walleye, and the receiving waters could not have been in better condition," he said, noting weather conditions were generally overcast and rainy, making water temperatures favorable for the young fish. "Most lakes had rising cooler water, or were in a newly flooded condition ... it was perfect."

Altogether, 78 lakes and rivers were stocked in North Dakota, Weigel said, covering every corner of the state. "The fish quality was fantastic during the entire two-and-a-half weeks of shipping," he said, "plus it was rare to come to a lake where drivers did not have to go through rising water to get to a dock."

"We have set the stage for a phenomenal walleye year," Weigel continued. "We will know more this fall when our crews check on survival rate of the stocked fish and determine the amount of natural reproduction."

Deer Hunting Opportunities Still Available

Interested deer hunters still have time to purchase licenses for North Dakota's 2005 deer gun season.

These licenses, all for antlerless white-tailed deer, are available to hunters who don't already have a license, or for those who want additional licenses.

Hunters can apply online at the Game and Fish website, discovernd.com/gnf. Paper applications are available from Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors. Residents and nonresidents are eligible to apply.

Hunters are reminded that additional doe licenses can be used during the archery season with a bow; deer gun season with a bow, rifle, or muzzle-loader; or during the muzzle-loader season with a muzzle-loader. Hunters must stay in the unit to which the license is assigned.

The regular deer gun season begins at noon November 4 and continues through November 20.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

Barstad Appointed Fisheries Tech

Justen Barstad, fisheries seasonal employee working out of the district office in Devils Lake since 2002, was hired in July as a fisheries technician for the south central district in Bismarck.

Barstad has a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from South Dakota State University.



Justen Barstad

Deckert Fills Licensing Clerk Position

Tina Deckert began working for the Department in July as a license clerk in the main office in Bismarck. She previously worked for the Burleigh County Child Support Division as a public service technician.



Tina Deckert

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS ON TELEVISION

Your Weekly Window on the WILD

Bismarck	KFYR	Tuesday	10 pm
Bismarck	KXMB	Sunday	10 pm
Bismarck	CATV	Saturday	Noon
Dickinson	KQCD	Tuesday	*9 pm
Dickinson	KXMA	Sunday	*9 pm
Fargo	KVRR	Sunday	9 pm
Grand Forks	WDAZ	Wednesday	5 pm
Minot	KMOT	Tuesday	10 pm
Minot	KXMC	Monday	Noon
Williston	KUMV	Tuesday	10 pm
Williston	KXMD	Monday	Noon

*Mountain time